

By Order entered on June 1, 2011, the undersigned determined that an updated Application to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* was required based upon Plaintiff's release from custody. (Document No. 6.); See DeBlasio v. Gilmore, 315 F.3d 396 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2003). The Court further noted that Plaintiff failed to set forth specific allegations explaining how Defendant violated his constitutional rights. (Document No. 6.) Accordingly, the undersigned ordered that (1) "Plaintiff shall either pay the \$350 filing fee or file an updated Application to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* by Friday, July 1, 2011," and (2) "Plaintiff has until Friday, July 1, 2011, to amend his Complaint to specifically set forth his

constitutional claims and state specific facts as to how Defendant violated his constitutional rights.”

(Id.) The undersigned further notified Plaintiff as follows:

Failure of the Plaintiff to (1) amend his Complaint, and (2) either pay the filing fee or file an updated Application to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* by July 1, 2011, will result in a recommendation of dismissal of this matter without prejudice pursuant to Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Rule 41.1 of the Local Rules of Civil Procedure for the Southern District of West Virginia.

(Id.) Plaintiff has not responded to the Court’s Order that was entered more than a month ago.

Accordingly, the undersigned has determined that Plaintiff has failed to take any steps to prosecute this action, and therefore, Plaintiff’s Complaint in this case should be dismissed.

### ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Rule 41.1 of the Local Rules of Civil Procedure for the Southern District of West Virginia, District Courts possess the inherent power to dismiss an action for a *pro se* Plaintiff’s failure to prosecute *sua sponte*.<sup>1</sup> See Link v. Wabash Railroad Co., 370 U.S. 626, 629, 82 S.Ct. 1386, 1388, 8 L.Ed.2d 734 (1962).

Rule 41.1 of the Local Rules provides:

**Dismissal of Actions.** When it appears in any pending civil action that the principal issues have been adjudicated or have become moot, or that the parties have shown no interest in further prosecution, the judicial officer may give notice to all counsel and unrepresented parties that the action will be dismissed 30 days after the date of the notice unless good cause for its retention on the docket is shown. In the absence of good cause shown within that period of time, the judicial officer may dismiss the

---

<sup>1</sup> Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides:

**(b) Involuntary Dismissal: Effect.** If the plaintiff fails to prosecute or to comply with these rules or any order of court, a defendant may move to dismiss the action or any claim against it. Unless the dismissal order states otherwise, a dismissal under this subdivision (b) and any dismissal not under this rule - - except one for lack of jurisdiction, improper venue, or failure to join a party under Rule 19 - - operates as an adjudication on the merits.

action. The clerk shall transmit a copy of any order of dismissal to all counsel and unrepresented parties. This rule does not modify or affect provisions for dismissal of actions under FR Civ P 41 or any other authority.

Although the propriety of a dismissal “depends on the particular circumstances of the case,” in determining whether to dismiss a case involuntarily for want of prosecution, the District Court should consider the following four factors:

- (i) the degree of personal responsibility of the plaintiff;
- (ii) the amount of prejudice caused the defendant,
- (iii) the existence of a history of deliberately proceeding in a dilatory fashion, and
- (iv) the existence of a sanction less drastic than dismissal.

Ballard v. Carlson, 882 F.2d 93, 95 (4th Cir. 1989). In consideration of the first three factors, the Court finds that the delays in this case are attributable solely to the Plaintiff as the Defendant has not been required to make an appearance in this action.<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915, federal courts may authorize the commencement of an inmate’s civil action *in forma pauperis* upon the inmate’s filing an Application to so proceed, together with an Affidavit stating the nature of the action and Plaintiff’s belief that he is entitled to redress. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(a)(1) and (2)(2002). “Section 1915 is intended to allow qualified litigants to proceed without having to advance the fees and costs associated with litigation.” DeBlasio v. Gilmore, 315 F.3d 396, 398 (4th Cir. 2003). Plaintiff has not responded to the Court’s Order directing him to file an Amended Complaint and either to pay the requisite \$350.00 filing fee in full or to file an updated Application to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* (Document No. 6.) Plaintiff, therefore, is the sole cause of the delays in this action. With respect to

---

<sup>2</sup> The Bureau of Prisons’ Inmate Locator indicates that Plaintiff was released from custody on September 19, 2008, about four months after he filed his Complaint in this matter. It is Plaintiff’s responsibility to provide the Court with a notice of change of address. *See* Rule 83.5 of the Local Rules of Civil Procedure (“A *pro se* party must advise the clerk promptly of any changes in name, address, and telephone number.”)

the second and third factors, although the record is void of further evidence indicating that Plaintiff has a history of “deliberately proceeding in a dilatory fashion,” the Court does not find that the named Defendant will be prejudiced by dismissal of Plaintiff’s Complaint.

In consideration of the fourth factor, the Court acknowledges that a dismissal under either Rule 41(b) or Local Rule 41.1 is a severe sanction against Plaintiff that should not be invoked lightly. The particular circumstances of this case, however, do not warrant a lesser sanction. An assessment of fines, costs, or damages against Plaintiff would be futile in view of Plaintiff’s failure to pay the filing fee. Moreover, explicit warnings of dismissal would be ineffective in view of Plaintiff’s failure to respond to the undersigned’s Order entered more than a month ago advising Plaintiff that the undersigned would recommend dismissal if Plaintiff failed to complete and file the above documents (Document No. 6.). Accordingly, the undersigned has determined that this action should be dismissed without prejudice unless Plaintiff is able to show good cause for his failure to prosecute.

#### **PROPOSAL AND RECOMMENDATION**

The undersigned therefore hereby respectfully **PROPOSES** that the District Court confirm and accept the foregoing findings and **RECOMMENDS** that the District Court **DISMISS** this case without prejudice for failure to prosecute and remove this matter from the Court’s docket.

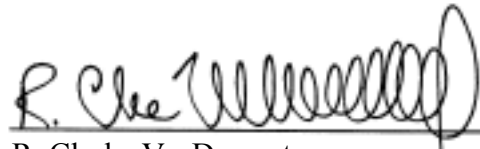
The Plaintiff is hereby notified that this “Proposed Findings and Recommendation” is hereby **FILED**, and a copy will be submitted to the Honorable United States District Judge Irene C. Berger. Pursuant to the provisions of Title 28, United States Code, Section 636(b)(1)(B), and Rule 6(e) and 72(b), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Plaintiff shall have seventeen days (fourteen days, filing of objections and three days, mailing/service) from the date of filing of this Findings and

Recommendation within which to file with the Clerk of this Court specific written objections identifying the portions of the Findings and Recommendation to which objection is made and the basis of such objection. Extension of this time period may be granted for good cause.

Failure to file written objections as set forth above shall constitute a waiver of *de novo* review by the District Court and a waiver of appellate review by the Circuit Court of Appeals. Snyder v. Ridenour, 889 F.2d 1363, 1366 (4th Cir. 1989); Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140, 155 (1985); Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841, 846 (4th Cir. 1985); United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91, 94 (4th Cir. 1984). Copies of such objections shall be served on opposing parties, District Judge Berger and this Magistrate Judge.

The Clerk of this Court is directed to file this “Proposed Findings and Recommendation” and to mail a copy of the same to Plaintiff, who is acting *pro se*.

Date: July 12, 2011.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
R. Clarke VanDervort  
United States Magistrate Judge